



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
JUDICIAL BRANCH

CHAMBERS OF  
BARBARA M. QUINN, JUDGE  
CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR

231 CAPITOL AVENUE  
HARTFORD, CT 06106

Testimony of  
Judge Barbara M. Quinn, Chief Court Administrator  
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing  
March 9, 2009

**Senate Bill 141, An Act Concerning Review of Guardian Ad Litem  
Fees and Expenses**

Good morning Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Barbara Quinn and I am the Chief Court Administrator. I would like to address **Senate Bill No. 141, *An Act Concerning Review of Guardian Ad Litem Fees and Expenses***. I have concerns with this proposal, which would allow any interested party to obtain an independent review of guardian ad litem fees and expenses.

I recognize that the issue of appointment and compensation of guardians ad litem (GALs) is of great concern to some of you, and I would be happy to discuss it with you at greater length. By way of background, guardians ad litem are most often appointed for children whose parents are involved in a divorce case or are the subject of a child protection case. The purpose of appointing the GAL is to safeguard the best interests of the children in these difficult and highly emotional cases. Conflict and differences of opinion are inherent in these situations. There are times when what the GAL determines is in the best interests of the child is contrary to what the parent may want or believe is best.

I do not believe that this proposal is the best way to address concerns with the GAL process. It would have a have a negative impact on our family and juvenile courts. It would compel the court to hold a hearing within seven days and render a decision no later than fourteen days later. Our court dockets – particularly our family court and family support magistrate dockets – are very long, and filled with some of the most contentious issues imaginable. To impose such a strict timeframe for the resolution of the matters addressed in the bill would be extremely burdensome and disruptive. In addition, it would circumvent the appeal process, which is the proper way to challenge a decision made by a trial judge.

For these reasons, I would urge the Committee not to act favorably on this proposal. However, as I stated earlier, I would be pleased to discuss this matter at greater length with the bill's proponents so that we can resolve this issue.

Thank you for your consideration.